

Representative SCOTT SMITH  
1997  
2nd District Session Report



Committees: • Financial Institutions and Insurance, vice chair  
• Government Administration  
• Education



Dear Friends:

By now, I'm sure you have read or heard quite a bit about the accomplishments of this past legislative session, and I will mention a few of them briefly in this report. But since this session saw significant advances in two areas of great concern to me – education and juvenile justice – I'll concentrate on them and another issue I'm concerned about: election reform.

Among the session's major achievements were: Cutting taxes nearly \$400 million, including a property tax referendum to prevent an increase in the state property tax levy and limit increases in all nonvoter-approved levies.

A sweeping welfare reform measure that requires greater personal accountability and time limits on benefits for able-bodied recipients.

An operating budget that increases spending for basic education by \$323 million but limits the overall state spending increase to 7.7 percent, the lowest percentage increase since 1971.

As always, I am grateful for the calls and letters of support from so many of you. If you think that because you and I don't belong to the same political party, you can't call my office for help or give me your ideas, then I want to set you straight! Candidates for public office must be affiliated with a political party, but that does not mean that when they're elected they only represent that party. Please remember I serve everyone in the 2nd District.

Again, I thank you for giving me your trust and please feel free to call my office in Olympia at (360) 786-7912.

Scott Smith  
State Representative

## EDUCATION AND CRIME

One of the legislative committees of which I'm a member is the Education Committee. This is ideal from my point of view because I've always believed that education is the most important issue I could possibly deal with as a state legislator.

As a former member of the House Law and Justice Committee, I am also particularly concerned about crime and the explosive situation that could exist in this country in just a few years as the children of the "baby boomers" reach young adulthood – the age when individuals are most likely to be involved in crime. Many of the actions we've taken this session will, I believe, defuse this situation.

We passed 25 bills to improve academics, discipline, community involvement and choice in schools and we adopted the most sweeping changes in our juvenile justice system in 20 years. Several of the changes in education that I have fought hardest for were included in legislation that passed and was signed into law this year. I firmly believe, for instance, that we need to get back to basics and make sure our kids have the skills they need to get a job and succeed when they leave school. To put it simply, kids who stay in school and are able to find good jobs afterward are least likely to turn to crime.

We adopted legislation to encourage and help schools do a better job of teaching reading in the earliest grades (HB 2042). Children must learn to read earlier so they will be able to learn the other fundamental skills they will need to be productive citizens.

The state operating budget we adopted increases support for education, while taking steps to ensure that more resources are directed into the classroom to improve teaching and help kids learn.

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### DISCIPLINE

Every parent has the right to know their children will be safe when they are at school. We adopted legislation (HB 1581 and HB 1841) giving educators the tools and authority to maintain greater discipline in the classroom, allowing teachers to keep order and stop disruptive students from undermining the learning of other kids. It takes a safe environment for teachers to be able to teach and for kids to be able to learn.

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

To see that parents and students have the choices they need to make sure all students get the education that works best for them, now and in the future, we need to get everybody involved.

This session, we passed legislation (HB 1303) freeing local schools from unnecessary and excessive government regulations and red tape that hurt efforts to improve education.

Another measure adopted by the Legislature (HB 1865) will give schools more options in providing students with the best education they can. We wanted strict standards of excellence and high academic requirements rather than low standards that only encourage mediocrity. Our committee is now working with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to achieve the highest possible academic standards while leaving out the controversial social issues that have diverted attention from what should be the main goals of a public education.

I want the best for my children, as I know we all do. Education, a true academics-based education, will set each of our children free to be all they can be, and better enable each of them to compete in today's tough job market.

Let's all get involved as parents, teachers, neighbors and friends, to teach the children the benefits of a good education, especially the importance of knowing how to read. If they can read, they will succeed.

### JUVENILE CRIME

The continuing increase in violent juvenile crime is the greatest threat to the safety of the people, families and neighborhoods throughout Washington. This year we succeeded in enacting a juvenile justice reform measure that makes the most significant changes in 20 years.

Our reforms will make a real difference, both in protecting society from dangerous offenders and in changing the behavior of teen-agers to reduce the number who commit repeat offenses and embark on a career of crime. I see a very strong relationship between what we're doing with juvenile crime and the improvements we're making in our educational system. We are emphasizing

personal accountability and parental involvement, making our schools safer and offering juveniles a clear choice about their futures.

Our juvenile crime reform provides greater flexibility for prosecutors and judges to deal with offenders. We encourage alternative sentencing options, including: boot camp, home detention, mandatory alcohol and drug treatment, community service, and other sentences that ensure there will be an appropriate punishment and rehabilitative program for every youngster who breaks the law.



Rep. Smith discusses proposed election reform legislation with Rep. Linda Parlette, R-Wenatchee.

Our reform plan provides stricter punishment for older teen-agers who commit the most serious crimes by broadening the law that tries and sentences the worst juvenile offenders as adults. Currently, 16- and 17-year-olds who commit murder or rape, or are chronic and violent offenders are automatically sent to adult court. The reform measure adds to the law the crimes of drive-by shooting, first-degree robbery, first-degree child rape, first-degree burglary if the offender has a prior conviction, and any crime in which the offender was armed with a firearm.

We require parents of juvenile offenders to participate in court proceedings involving their children. Parents must take greater responsibility for the behavior of their kids and the state must give parents back the right to discipline and control their children.

Our reform measure ensures that the juvenile record will be automatically unsealed for any adult who commits a felony and that any felony committed as a juvenile will be considered part of the criminal record for adult offenders. No adult can be considered a first-time offender if they had a felony record as a juvenile.

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## ELECTION REFORM

Another area where I concentrated much of my attention this past session was in attempting to straighten out the election process – something that I believe definitely needs more legislative scrutiny.

HB 1376 would have instituted new safeguards to ensure the security of absentee ballots while they are being processed. This is an area of concern to me because of the slip-ups that have occurred in the past in some counties and the potential for fraud. My bill would have seen to it that the sealing and storage of the absentee vote containers was carried out with the strictest security possible and the containers would be kept secure until they were opened after the polls close on election day.

HB 1563 would have required that all voters show proper identification when voting at polling places. The identification required could be a valid Washington state driver's license, an identicard issued by the Department of Licensing, a U.S. passport or U.S. military service identification card. This bill would also have allowed a precinct election officer to challenge a person's right to vote if the election officer had reason to doubt the person's identity or right to vote in that precinct.

HB 1844 ties in very closely with the above bill, in that it would have required better identification for voter registration. When registering to vote, the applicant would have to have sufficient identification information to absolutely establish his or her right to take part in the voting process. This information would include the documents listed above, as well as the designation of the applicant's place of birth. If born outside the U.S., the applicant's naturalization number or the name and place of birth of both parents would have to be provided. No more simply asking when someone appears at a Department of Licensing services office, "Do you want to register to vote?" without knowing the applicant's citizenship status.

HB 1846 is a bill that would have required better "housekeeping" by county auditors with respect to voter registration lists. It would have required each county auditor to have in place before May 1, 2000, a system to conduct a thorough review of the county's voter registration list as part of the auditor's periodic list maintenance procedures as required by state law.

Although none of these measures were successful in making it through the legislative process, they did call legislators' attention to the importance of election security issues and the necessity of seeing that elections are conducted fairly and accurately. I am sure that now these issues have been raised, they will stand a much better chance of seeing action next session.

## 2nd District Questionnaire Results

My thanks to the 1,600 2nd District residents who took the time to fill out the questionnaire I sent out at the beginning of the session. As promised, I studied the results carefully and now I want to share them with you. *(Totals for each question may not add up to 100 percent because not all those responding answered every question.)*

1 Please list from 1 to 6 which of the following options you like best.

43 percent	Reduce property taxes
17 percent	Reduce the Motor Vehicle Excise Tax
9 percent	Target tax cuts to spur the economy
8 percent	Reduce sales taxes
5.5 percent	Roll back the 1993 business and occupation tax hike
5.5 percent	No tax cut

2 Would you support an increase in the state gas tax if the extra revenue went for road improvements in our district?

No	59 percent
Yes	31 percent

3 If you answered yes, how much of an increase would you support?

55 percent	2 cents
21 percent	3 cents
6 percent	4 cents
9 percent	5 cents
8 percent	6 cents

4 Do you support or oppose the county auditor opening your secret election ballot 10 days before the election?

63 percent	Oppose
34 percent	Support

5 How do you feel about mail-in ballots versus poll voting?

70 percent	Favor mail-in ballots
28 percent	Favor poll voting

6 Were you or your precinct forced into a mail-in ballot situation when you otherwise would like to have voted at the polls?

87 percent	No
8 percent	Yes

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**7** Would you support school vouchers and/or tax credits for parents sending their children to private schools? *(Total equals more than 100 percent because some checked more than one.)*

12 percent	Support school vouchers
8 percent	Oppose school vouchers
10 percent	Support tax credits for parents
3.5 percent	Oppose tax credits for parents
34 percent	Support both school vouchers and tax credits for parents
37 percent	Oppose both school vouchers and tax credits for parents

**8** Should we keep the current 60 percent super-majority voter requirement necessary to pass special levy and bond issues as opposed to a simple majority of 50 percent?

75 percent	Yes
22 percent	No

**9** Juvenile justice reform will again be an issue before the Legislature. Should 16- and 17-year-old juveniles who commit violent crimes be treated as adults in our judicial system?

94 percent	Yes
4 percent	No

**10** Should kids involved in street gangs be allowed to transfer from one school district to another when they have been suspended for violent or disruptive behavior?

86 percent	No
11 percent	Yes

**11** Should criminals be required to serve their entire prison sentence instead of a portion of it, which now happens sometimes?

87 percent	Yes
9 percent	No

**12** Because of passage of Initiative 134, state representatives cannot serve more than three consecutive two-year terms (six years) in the House, while state senators cannot serve more than two four-year terms (eight years) in the Senate. Would you favor increasing the number of consecutive terms state representatives may serve from three to four so the total number of years both may serve is equal?

57 percent	Yes
40 percent	No

**13** Federal funding for public assistance is no longer available for legal immigrants who are not U.S. citizens. Should Washington provide assistance to non-citizen legal immigrants?

77 percent	No
20 percent	Yes

### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

TOLL-FREE HOTLINE..... 1-800-562-6000

Rep. Smith's Olympia number  
during session: ..... 360-786-7912

Rep. Smith's number in district  
(not in session): ..... 253-840-4777

Rep. Smith's home phone number: ..... 253-846-8947

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